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Letitia Hester to Fanny Bracher, 15 July 1865

Blackwood Grange

July 15<sup>th</sup> 1865

My very dear Fanny

I am so sorry I could not write to you last month but besides having several letters to write I was very unwell having taken a severe cold — you must not expect a photographed likeness of Aunt T's place from my description but according to my ability I will give the best idea I can of them & their place — your Uncle has 40,000 acres of land, about 4000 sheep, and 40 horses or somewhere near that number, a large vine yard, a garden well stocked with fruit of many kinds, besides fields & barns and different things of that kind — now for the family — Uncle Edw<sup>d</sup> do you wish me to tell you what he is like? Yes to be sure I do Aunt — well then he stands 6 ft all but ½ an inch dark complexion, nearly bald, and very grey, and very thin, and but I mustn't tell tales out of school sometimes very cross — Aunt T is a trifle under 5 ft but I think the high heeled boots make up the loss, she weighs considerably *more* than her husband she looks very well indeed with a strong resemblance to the *likenesses* we have of your dear mamma — of the younger people there are so many it would take a paper as large as the *Home News* to describe them on I'm something like your Uncle Henry I scarcely know whether there are *nine* or nineteen so you must solve that for yourself — they have not been doing anything to their advantage in the way of lessons since they left me Edward talks of getting a governess next year, I think he is putting them off too long

James Turner married Amelia second daughter of a very nice respectable person known as [*sic*] Mr Frank Armstrong I have not seen her since she was a child *then* I thought her pretty

I have often thought how much I should prefer living in Sydney to this dull part of the world I have heard it is very much like England with the advantage of a better climate

I don't think you would like this part of the world after enjoying such a nice refined home as dear Aunt has been able to afford you

Though rather premature as the 19<sup>th</sup> has not arrived yet I cannot omit wishing you *many many happy returns* of the day I can scarcely realise the fact that you in a few days will be eighteen, when you write you must tell me how you spent your birthday

Uncle Robert says it would give him great pleasure to be able to *see* you and much more to *hear* you sing some of the pretty songs you must have learned by this time – How very kind it is of Aunt to take so much trouble with your education I need not say I hope you are all you ought to be to her — I am glad to hear you like the idea of being a governess — It seems pleasant to follow our inclinations when they are properly directed

I wrote to your Mamma last month — I do wish your dear Papa could enter into some way of business that would insure them a little more comfort than they have had lately – I know their affairs will be better by & bye & there is some comfort in that. I often wish I could see them, Uncle says he will send me & one of the children some day when times are better with us and he can afford to do so with comfort to us all

I don't know what you'll say to Aunt Letitia's *budget* this time I only hope my dear it will not puzzle you to read it — and now with kind love in which your Uncle & cousins unite — Believe me dear Fanny

Your affectionate Aunt

Letitia Hester

Give my kind love to Aunt & cousins